

Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

Vol. 25, No. 2

January, 1957

CANADA NORTH with Bert Harwell

On Thursday, January 31, The Third in a series of five Screen Tours, sponsored by the Audubon Society of St. Louis, will be given at 8:15 p.m. at the Third Baptist Church, Grand and Washington. On this occasion we will be very fortunate in having as our guest lecturer Mr. Bert Harwell.

From life-long study and intimate association with flora and fauna, Bert Harwell can translate for his audience a dry and sweltering desert or great expanse of arctic tundra into areas of beauty and drama. Remote mountain ranges become as familiar as one's own garden. From far away and near-by, Mr. Harwell brings the songs of both rarely heard and common birds to his listeners. He speaks with authority and charm, illustrating his talks visually with magnificent color motion pictures, and vocally with skillful bird-song interpretations which add an unusual touch to his program.

A graduate of the University of California, he later received his master's degree from the same school after graduate study at Columbia and Leland Stanford Universities. He was principal in the Berkeley schools for several years. Then, because of his outstanding work in nature education, the National Park Service invited him to accept the position of Park Naturalist at Yosemite.

In 1940, Mr. Harwell joined the staff of the National Audubon Society and has since been engaged in furthering appreciation of nature and the out-of-doors. His photographic and lecture assignments have taken him all over Canada and to Hawaii, Mexico, the Caribbean and South America, besides countless tours in all 48 states. Motion pictures of technical and artistic excellence are the impressive results of his travels. Some of his films have been used in Walt Disney's True Life Adventure Series.

Mr. Harwell's lectures combine colorful presentation with authentic scientific knowledge, creating a rare experience which makes it entertaining to be instructed. He is a vivid raconteur, whose wit and charm delight his Screen Tour audiences.

In Canada there is a big, fabulous country of Eskimos, Indians, trappers, Mounties, and huskies; of woods buffalo, elk, reindeer; mighty rivers seldom-seen; and vast plains, or Arctic tundra, carpeted with brilliantly colored wild flowers. It is a land peopled by willow ptarmigan, horned larks, golden plover, old squaw ducks, snow buntings and Wilson's phalaropes. Here amid paint brush, vetch, rhododendron and orchid, a tiny arctic azalea grows only one inch tall.

Penetrating into this strange and beautiful land of the mid-night sun, Bert Harwell, National Audubon Society photographer, filmed these plants, birds, scenes and wildflowers, beginning with buffalo and elk at Riding Mountain Park near Winnipeg and following a trail north that ended at Aklavik, in the Mackenzie River delta, north of the Arctic Circle. There, Harwell photographed the Indians, towns and the Delta Eskimos coming in their schooners to sell their rich, winter's catch of furs. Then by plane to Richards Island in the Arctic Ocean, the film records the summer round-up of reindeer by the Eskimos, and included too, a thrilling picture story of the hunt for the great white whale.

A strange and lovely land this country of the Arctic, where Harwell has filmed the sun as it moved, remaining above the horizon, in a circle in the sky. "Canada North" is the northland at its best, in the bright dress of an arctic summer, where the light of day never dies and the life of night is that of day.

Remember the date, Thursday, January 31. The Screen Tours are open to the general public. This is an opportunity we should all avail ourselves of, by getting as many people to these meetings as possible, we can spread the story of conservation.

BIRDS IN A CITY BOTANICAL GARDEN

Edgar Anderson

It seems to me that there are more birds today in the Garden than when I first came here thirty-five years ago this next autumn. It seems so at any rate, though I wish there were a series of census records made at comparable times of year. There have been changes, of course. In 1922 the European Tree Sparrow was still fairly common around Mr. Shaw's Old Residence; I never

saw any of them after the mules were replaced by motor equipment. This is not a really critical piece of evidence; in those days before smoke control, city sparrows were all pretty sooty looking. However, Mr. Sterling P. Jones once spent a morning in the garden with me shortly after that time and he couldn't find any either. I think it is almost certain that there are fewer song sparrows now than there used to be though, during their spring migration, the White Crowns are, if anything, more abundant. I sometimes wonder if there are really more of the latter during cold and rainy springs or if it is merely that they sing so much in cool, misty weather and one realizes how many of them are about.

One has to know the Garden after its closing hours to realize how much it is used by some of the birds in the city. In addition to those who spend the day here, there are those who regularly flock in during the night. During early spring migration, the numbers of male robins increase magically about five or six o'clock in the evening; I have frequently seen several score of them on the little green circle of turf in front of Henry Shaw's old house. During mid to late summer robins flock in here every night. If one sits out in any nearby garden (on Flora Place, for instance) during these weeks he will notice that in the late afternoon and evening all the robins are moving one way. It is not a mass flight. They go by two's and three's and four's. They fly low and stop here and there but all the time they keep on coming along. Nearly all movement is towards the Garden rather than away from it and by sundown the Garden is full to overflowing. The Rose Garden, the Knolls, and all other areas where the turf is mowed are full of them. As it gets dark they begin to roost in the trees and bushes. Some evenings there will be well over a thousand of them in the Rose Garden alone.

Tree swallows come here in large numbers on some evenings,

EVERYTHING IN BOOKS

HECHT BOOK SHOP

4207 Olive Street

ST. LOUIS 8, MO.

FRanklin 1-9242

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The 1957 Audubon Calendar
Comes From Us

J. HARRY VEATCH

General Agent

NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL
LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

418 Olive Street

CEntral 1-3931

apparently not so regularly or over so long a period as the robins. There have been evenings when they were flying in fairly regular circles over the lily pools and around the Rose Garden, much like the Swifts above the Tower Grove Park chimneys so graphically described by Otto Widman.

The water in the Garden is certainly important to the birds which are attracted here. During the winter we keep a feeding station going at the rear of our home and the water brings in more birds than the food. The bird bath is a simple metal shell; during cold weather we melt out the ice with a tea-kettle of hot water and put in warm water, usually several times a day. By mid-winter we nearly always have two or three robins as regular boarders and bathers. One year, during a February warm spell, a flock of robins moved into the Garden, supposedly from some cedar glade outside the city. Our regular robin boarders served as decoys in attracting them to our feeding station and they hung around for some weeks, even after the weather turned cold again.

There are so many squirrels in the Garden that we do not put out fruit unless we see a mocking bird near the house. Once he has seen the fruit, however, we usually have him on hand for the rest of the winter. We save our discarded apples and put them out one at a time in the center of a wrought iron table that the squirrels are not fond of. The mocking bird has a dainty way of feeding from frozen apples, making a neat hole which he enlarges around the edges from day to day, always picking up the crumbs.

From living in the Garden we now realize that one of the main factors in determining where the quail spend the winter is the Sweet Gum trees. There are large old fruiting trees in this part of the garden and in a good year the tiny seeds spill out in great abundance from the gay little seed balls. They fall to the ground in such quantity that the paved walk looks as if someone had spilled a gray brown breakfast cereal like Ralstons or Wheaten

LETTERHEADS
PROGRAMS
BOOKLETS
WEDDING INVITATIONS
• • •

HOPE PRESS, INC.
9912 Clayton Road
WYdown 3-2222

**BINOCULARS — SCOPES
BAROMETERS**

Bausch & Lomb, Carl Zeiss,
Bushnell
Taylor and Airguide
16 YEARS REPAIR EXPERIENCE

HOUSE OF OPTICS
OPTICIANS
3630 Washington Ave.
St. Louis 8, Mo.

all over the place. Most of the seeds fall among the leaves and though the quail coveys work at these areas nearly every afternoon it takes them all winter to finish the job. Once the sweet gums have brought the coveys to this part of the garden they come into our yard regularly and feed on the bird seed which we scatter there but unless there is a good sweet gum seed crop we never see them all winter long. The coveys are now getting larger each year, partly because the grounds superintendent, Mr. Louis Brenner, is a quail expert and sees to it that one or two weed patches near the dump heap are not mowed until the quail have other good places to feed.

Watching the birds in our city botanical garden does not have the emotional appeal of a bird walk along a country lane, yet it has certain real advantages. By noticing how the birds adapt (or do not adapt) themselves to the changing city environment one begins to understand them more readily than he ever would in the country. Eventually such studies bring one real satisfaction. After all, man is a part of Nature; we shall not understand Man and his place in the world until we start taking an intelligent interest in the birds and plants which stick by him in towns and cities. Whether we like it or not, this is the vegetation, these are the birds of the future. There is an urgent and growing need for groups like the St. Louis Audubon Society to spend more of their time and thought on analyzing the patterns of bird life in St. Louis itself. Such areas as Shaw's Garden are a real challenge for naturalists with a reflective turn of mind.

GROSSENHEIDER RECEIVES CONSERVATION AWARD

The annual award given by the Society to the citizen of greater St. Louis who, in the opinion of the Board of Directors, has contributed most to the cause of conservation was awarded this year to Richard P. Grossenheider. Grossenheider is probably the nation's top mammal artist and is best known as co-author and illustrator of the Mammal guide in the Peterson Series.

Dick is a first class naturalist as well as artist and has long been recognized for his demonstrations of close kinship to birds and animals. It has been aptly said of him "that he must have a little of the blood of small mammals in his veins, so well does he capture their moods in his paintings."

The St. Louis area and the Audubon Society is very happy to see this award given to one so deserving. His sympathy with the problems of conservation and his realistic approach to the needs of the people made the job of the judges a simple one.

ST. LOUIS AUDUBON BULLETIN

PUBLISHED BY

The St. Louis Audubon Society

Earl H. Hath.....President
James F. Comfort.....Editor
Mrs. J. Marshall Magner.....Executive Secretary

The St. Louis Audubon Society took over the Saturday half hour nature programs at 2:00 and 7:00 p.m. in the Geodesic Dome of the Mid-America Jubilee at the St. Louis Waterfront. Some of the participants from local nature organizations were Dr. Edgar Anderson, Bruce Dowling, Jim Comfort, Jim Jackson, Rex Conyers, Marshall Magner, Bertha and Joel Massie, Dick Grossenheider and Earl Hath, in that order. Society president, Earl Hath, faithfully acted as master of ceremonies at each presentation with Connie Hath aiding and abetting in securing the talent.

The St. Louis Audubon Society is cooperating with Harris Teachers College in presenting a course in ornithology in the spring semester. Outstanding leaders of ornithology in the St. Louis area are donating their time to provide the very latest and best information in the field of bird study.

A brief review of the St. Louis Area 1956 birding activities within a 50 mile radius shows there were 274 species reported of which 15 were not in the 1955 total of 275. Rarest 1956 bird was a Mississippi kite at Pere Marquette Park in Calhoun County, Illinois. Lucky listers were Dave Jones and Earl Comfort. Highest area birder was Earl Comfort with 248 species followed by Earl Hath's 233 and Alberta Bulinger's 227. Other listers with 200 or more species were, Stoner Haven, Dave Jones, Lance Jones, Jack McDonald, Sally Springer and Jack Van Benyuhsen.

Warblers led the list with 38 species. Finches were represented by 36 kinds, shorebirds 25 and ducks 22.

SUET CAKES . . . SUNFLOWER SEED . . . PEANUT BUTTER BALLS

WILD BIRD SEED MIXTURE . . . BIRD HOUSES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

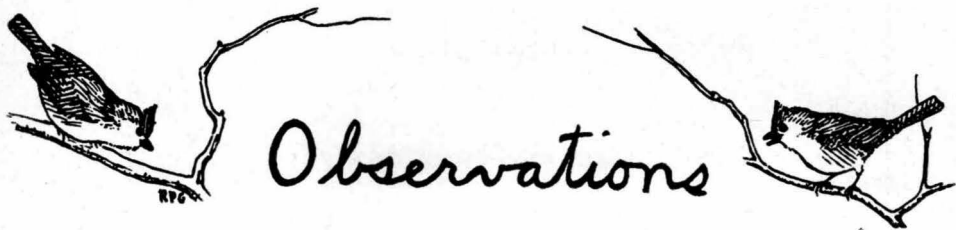
LARGE SELECTION OF WILD BIRD FEEDERS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ST. LOUIS SEED CO.

411 N. BROADWAY

"Quality Since 1903"



By J. E. Comfort

Because of the unseasonably warm, dry weather early fall birders were handicapped by an unnatural and unparalleled scarcity of their subject, with shorebirds throwing listeners for their greatest loss.

The September and October St. Charles County August A. Busch Wildlife Management Area monthly bird counts were far more enjoyable from a standpoint of the weather than from the co-operation of the birds, the few located being wary and hard to identify.

The bird walks at Creve Coeur Lake during the same months were a bit better as far as bird co-operation was concerned with equally favorable weather to induce participation. Because field trips are engineered more or less in order to get away from it all and to enjoy first hand Nature's varied offerings, no bird walk is considered unsuccessful regardless of the size of the list. These walks will be continued in the spring.

The Webster Groves Nature Study Society and St. Louis Audubon Society swelled the good attendance of the Missouri Audubon's Society's annual fall meeting at the Lake of the Ozarks State Park Oct. 13th and 14th. Our phenomenal luck relative to our boasted good weather for these occasions held out. In spite of the unfavorable dry conditions a total of 78 species was listed on the various nature walks. The botany hike was one of the highest in point of attendance.

The St. Charles County Marais Temps Clair dried marshes have again been flooded by a local hunting club to the mutual benefit of marsh loving birders and marsh dwelling wildlife.

Rarest Autumn bird was a Mississippi kite over Hy. 100 in Pere Marquette Park in Illinois on Sept. 22nd observed by Dave Jones and Earl Comfort. This is the only modern record for this species. On Oct. 21st Gene Wilhelm was within five feet of a rare saw-whet owl at Rockwoods Reservation in St. Louis County. Permitting such close approach is a characteristic "freezing" habit of this elfish owl. Sometimes it is actually possible to pick the bird from a tree as one might an apple. Some other scarce fall birds reported were horned grebe, Florida gallinule, avocet, sanderling, Franklin's gull, Cape May warbler, spotted towhee and Harris' sparrows. The last named in immature plumage, have been exceptionally common this season. A Gambel's white-crowned sparrow was banded in October by Bruce Dowling at his Busch Area residence.

Compliments of

HOWARD JOHNSON'S

Kirkwood

PICNIC SEASON AHEAD

Everyone is now looking forward to Spring and everyone should also be looking forward to the 2 picnics we have planned during the Spring season.

Two of our members have graciously made available places that have been very popular in the past so we feel sure that everyone will want to make preparations to attend. One outing will be at the estate of Mrs. Charles M. Rice near Antonio and the other will be at Leonard Hall's famous Possum Trot Farm. The exact dates will be announced later.

**St. Louis Audubon Society
516 Bacon Ave.
Webster Groves 19, Mo.**

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID

St. Louis, Mo.
Permit No. 5128